

White Paper Report

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Telecollaborative Webcasting:
Strengthening Acquisition of Humanities Content
Knowledge through World Language Education



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I. Project Summary and Objectives

The project *Telecollaborative Webcasting: Strengthening Acquisition of Humanities Content Knowledge through World Language Education* was implemented during 07/01/2010 - 08/31/2011 and was funded by the Level II NEH Digital Humanities Start-Up Grant. The project activities supported design, implementation, and evaluation of an innovative curriculum-development project aimed at strengthening humanities content learning through a telecollaborative foreign language project which included video/audio/textual bilingual exchanges between university students in the U.S. (specifically, the University of Georgia in Athens, GA) and Russia (Odintsovo Humanitarian University, the greater Moscow area). The project was motivated by expressed national needs to improve the efficacy of world language instruction as well as the depth of content area learning in humanities relevant to the interdisciplinary study of languages, cultures, and global communities. The project goals included 1) design and implementation of an innovative curriculum development project involving telecollaboration for world language learning and teaching; 2) production of learner-authored multimodal bilingual artifacts to serve as a compilation of digital humanities sources; and 3) dissemination of the teaching-learning materials via an open-access online resource which would serve scholars, learners, and general audiences interested in enriching their knowledge of humanities and world languages (specifically, Russian and English).

II. Project Terminology

Telecollaboration is defined as shared teaching and learning experience facilitated through the use of Internet technology between distanced partners in institutional settings (Dooly, 2008). In the Level 2 project described here, students in two world language classrooms, one in Russia and one in the U.S., were connected by common educational objectives via a video sharing channel with social networking capabilities (namely, <http://www.YouTube.com>) and, to a more limited extent, via Skype, an application for free computer-to-computer video calling (<http://www.skype.com>.)

Webcasting is defined here as a practice of authoring a video and sharing it via the Internet by using video streaming technology, e.g., the YouTube channel.

Telecollaborative webcasting refers to an educational activity between distanced classrooms which involves collaboration and shared responsibilities among students in webcast authoring, sharing, viewing, and discussion via the Internet.

III. Project Activities

The Project Director (PD), Dr. Victoria Hasko, started working on project planning and establishing a productive collaborative relationship with the overseas partner, Dr. Valentina Ikonnikova, Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI) as soon as the notification of the grant award was received in Spring of 2010. Pre-implementation activities carried out during the initial project planning played an important role in project design and, therefore, are briefly discussed before the funded activities are described in greater detail below.

1. Pre-Implementation: The Piloting Stage

While curriculum innovation is always a time-intensive endeavor, design and management of telecollaborative educational projects require significantly more time for curricular planning than traditional, face-to-face lessons and courses. Therefore, before the commencement of the funded activities, the PD in collaboration with the Russian Co-PI implemented a reduced-scale piloting of the instructional activities. Accordingly, in Spring 2010 students at the University of Georgia (UGA) enrolled in RUSS 3002 Intermediate Russian course and Russian students at the Odintsovo Humanitarian University (OHU) in the greater Moscow area enrolled in a Higher Intermediate English course participated in a pilot telecollaborative webcasting exchange. During the exchange, students had an opportunity to work in extended groups of 3-5 to author, share, and discuss webcasts in their language of study and in their native language in a balanced,

50/50 approach (known as an eTandem model, e.g., see Sziko, 2004.) Thus, Russian students produced several monolingual webcasts in Russian and several monolingual webcasts in English and vice versa; additionally, both Russian and American participants produced bilingual webcasts whose content was balanced between English and Russian on several topics of their choice. The webcasting assignment was integrated into a regular syllabus as a required add-on assignment; however, the telecollaboration activities had a limited time allotment.

The piloting of telecollaborative webcasting activities prior to the implementation of the funded project activities ultimately became an important component of the project. The piloting stage contributed to the project success in several ways. Thus, the activities during this period:

- allowed the PD to establish a working relationship with the Co-PI in Russia;
- informed the ensuing curricular design of the instructional component of the project, including a syllabus with *systematic integration* of telecollaborative activities into all aspects of the course, including the assessment rubric and a grade share;
- provided insights into possible caveats associated with the establishment and maintenance of successful relationships among students in the two countries;
- allowed the PD to gauge students' language proficiency, interests in/knowledge of humanities content areas pertaining to various issues on life and culture in Russia and the U.S., and technology competence, which, in

turn, enabled them to tailor the collaborative activities and their objectives to maximize learning and teaching outcomes;

- created an opportunity to test and select the optimal technology (digital camcorders) and the software (video editor; social networking space) for the project.

The insights gleaned during the pre-implementation stage (as well as from the NEH-funded implementation stage) are discussed in Section 4, *Lessons Learned*.

2. Project Implementation

Figure 1 represents major stages of the funded project, activities and the implementation timeline.



Figure 1. Project stages, activities, and timeline

a. Stage One: Curricular Design

The first stage of the project included development and coordination of the telecollaborative curriculum for intermediate-level language courses at UGA and OHU by the PD (Victoria Hasko) and the Russian Co-PI (Valentina Ikonnikova), who were also to serve as instructors for the telecollaboration courses. IRB permission was obtained and the necessary equipment was ordered. The instructors established objectives for the telecollaboration exchange, based on which they created and shared curricula for their AY2010-2011 courses. They communicated online and finalized the instructional plans and aligned their syllabi (both in terms of the timeline and content) during a face-to-face meeting in Moscow in August 2010. The PD met with the Application Support Group at UGA to discuss issues associated with video editing, creation of the web resources, hosting and maintenance expenses, and the optimal social networking environment. Both of the instructors negotiated and received approval for curricular innovation and changes to the existing syllabi from their department heads.

b. Stage Two: Instructional Implementation

The PD supervised all aspects of the Instructional Implementation stage. She was the primary instructor responsible for teaching telecollaborative modules at UGA, for authoring tasks, guidelines, assessment rubrics, and for coordinating all activities and scheduling with the Russian side. Throughout Fall 2010, students at

UGA enrolled in an intermediate-level Russian course RUSS 3001 and students at OHU enrolled in a content-course on English Phonetics and Phonology worked in dyads and/or triads to author, share, and discuss bilingual webcasts (50% in English and 50% in Russian) on topics of their choice related to various aspects of life and culture in Russia and the U.S. Students got to know each other and communicated with each other throughout the project by setting up YouTube channels and creating profiles for social networking and discussion of webcasts. During the exchange, students were required to arrange at least one Skype session with their overseas partners to further learn about each other and to explore topics of interest related to the exchange.

The telecollaboration instructors created systematic teaching and learning activities based on the webcast content which they explored with students in class by watching the webcasts and facilitating class discussions and language learning exercises/homework. Figure 2 on the next page summarizes the main facts about the instructional sites and participants, while the teaching-learning activities are presented in Figure 3 on p.12.

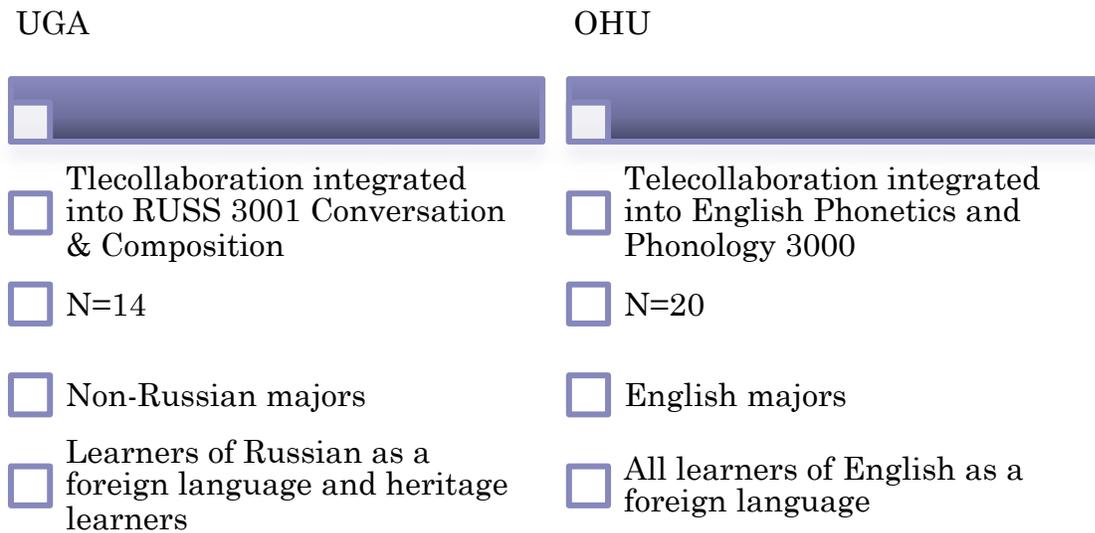


Figure 2. Project sites and participants

Upon the completion of the project, students created 52 webcasts on a variety of topics ranging from modern student life to cuisine, architecture, superstitions, and stereotypes in their home cultures. Forty two webcasts were chosen for the website due to the poor sound quality or academic weakness of content (see Table 1 for a catalogue of topics.)

Table 1. Webcast Catalogue

Webcasts on Russia	On Russia in English
	1. Soccer in Russia
	2. Subcultures
	3. Moscow from our Angle
	4. Kubinka
	5. English Club as a Hobby
	6. Making Russian Salt Pastry
	7. The Hobby of Dancing
	8. Motion is Life
	9. Hectic University Life
On Russia in Russian	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 10. A Walk in Moscow 11. The Heart of the Town of Odinstovo 12. A City Day Celebration 13. Hobbies of Russian University Students 14. A Russian Tavern 15. The Hobby of Photography 16. Russian Cuisine
	Bilingual Webcasts on Russia
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Education in Russia 18. Real Contemporary Life in Russia 19. Russian Wedding 20. Onomastics 21. Russian TV 22. Superstition and Mysticism in Russia 23. Stereotypes about Russia 24. Spare Time of Russian Students 25. Our University 26. Video Dating in Russia 27. Soviet Movies
Webcasts on the U.S.	Bilingual Webcasts on the U.S.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28. A Tour of Athens, Georgia, U.S. 29. Food in Athens 30. University Traditions 31. University Fitness 32. American Students' Favorite Movies 33. The Tradition of Tailgating 34. Student Life
	On the U.S. In English
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 35. A University Campus Tour 36. Student Center 37. Extracurricular Activities 38. A University Town 39. Fashion in Athens Georgia
	On the U.S. In Russian
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 40. Athens Zoo 41. Student Housing 42. American Students' Hobbies

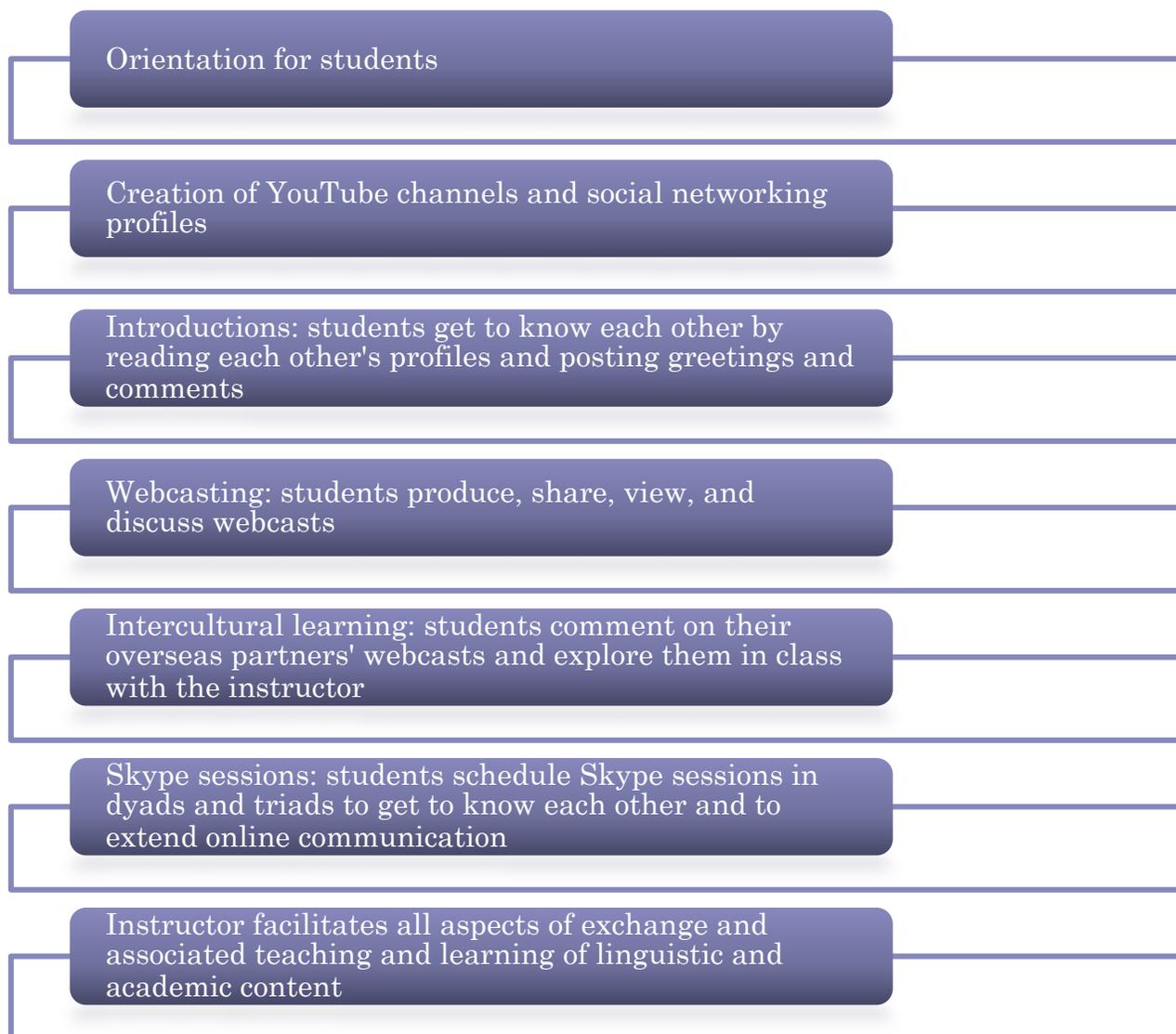


Figure 3. Teaching-learning activities

c. Stage Three: Web Resource Development

The successful implementation of Stage Two of the project ensured that a wealth of culturally, academically, and linguistically-relevant information was authored by students and compiled by the PD for the development of the web-based, open-access

digital humanities resource. Accordingly, a website was developed and launched by the PD in collaboration with ASG group. The website www.telecollaboration.info is entitled *Telecollaboration for World Language Education: An Educational Resource for Teachers and Learners*. See Figure 4 on the next page for a screen shot of the Home page and menu.

The website is a *collaborative 2.0 space*, which means that world audiences interested in contributing to the resource are invited to do so, and the Blog page of the website allows for contributing and discussion.

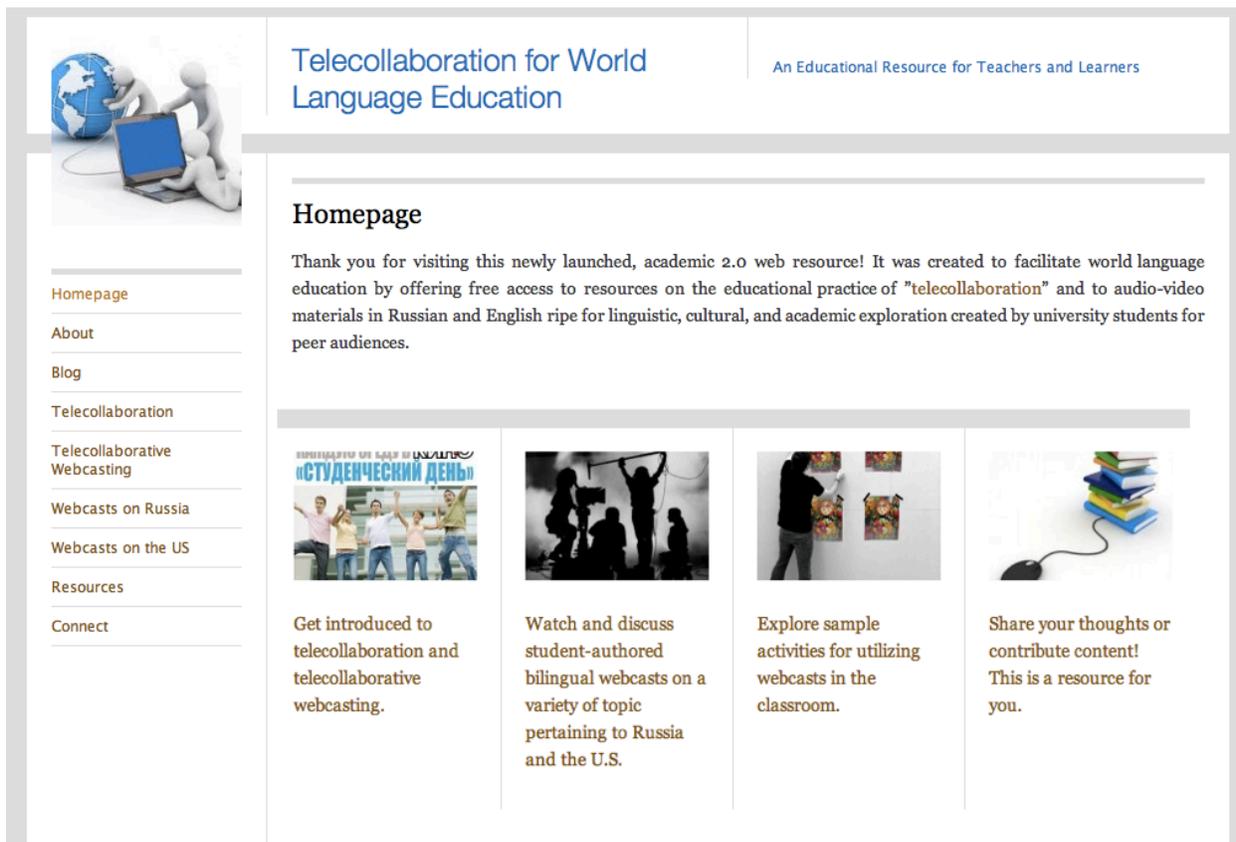


Figure 4. Screen shot of the Home page

The [About](#) page contains information about the ODH Digital Start-Up grant program, about the project at hand which inspired and funded the launch of the resource, and about the contributors to the website content.

The [Telecollaboration](#) page offers introductory information about telecollaboration and types of telecollaborative projects appropriate for facilitating communication in world language classrooms.

The [Telecollaborative Webcasting](#) page discusses the benefits of this type of educational activity with a particular focus on higher level classrooms.

The [Webcasts on Russia](#) page hosts Russian, English, and bilingual (balanced between Russian and English, according to the eTandem principle mentioned earlier) webcasts produced by Russian students. For example, see Figure 5 on the next page for a screen shot of a page with a sub-menu path from Webcasts on Russia to the three language options.

The [Webcasts on the U.S.](#) page host webcasts in English and in Russian, although the majority of the webcasts are bilingual and are balanced between Russian and English.

For the convenience of teachers and learners of Russian and English, each of the webcasts additionally contains a [transcript](#) to facilitate content/linguistic comprehension and/or development of instructional activities based on the webcast. Webcasts produced by language learners in their foreign language are additionally supplemented by a [corrected transcript](#). Select webcasts also contain

extended instructional activities whose goal is to support and provide ideas for cultural, content, and linguistic activities which can be developed to further explore the information contained in or related to the webcast.

The screenshot displays the website's header with the title "Telecollaboration for World Language Education" and the subtitle "An Educational Resource for Teachers and Learners". A navigation menu on the left includes links for "Homepage", "About", "Blog", "Telecollaboration", "Telecollaborative Webcasting", "Webcasts on Russia", "Webcasts on the US", "Resources", and "Connect". The main content area features a section titled "Webcasts on Russia" with a sub-header "If you are a teacher or learner of Russian as a World Language:". Below this, there is a paragraph of text and a small image of a cathedral at night. A search bar is located on the right side of the page.

Figure 5. Screen shot of webcast sub-menus

The activities were created by Graduate Assistants to the PD (funded by the University of Georgia), Susan Bleyle and Yuri Almetev. Figure 6 on the next page offers a screen shot capturing a segment of proposed instructional activities based on the webcast *Fashion in Athens*.

Proposed instructional activities

Prior to Viewing:

- Warm up activity: Ask your classmates about their favorite fashions. Record their answers on the chart below:

Name	Favorite summer clothing	Favorite winter clothing

- Discussion Questions:
 - Were the answers you recorded representative of more casual or dressier styles?
 - What type of clothing do you like to wear to class or around campus?
 - How much time and money do you spend on fashion?
 - How important do you think fashion is in the life of a college student?
- Vocabulary Building:

The following words may be new for some of you. Some of them are very colloquial in meaning. Take some time to discuss them in a small group. You may use a dictionary (e.g. dictionary.com), or an online corpus (e.g. <http://corpus.byu.edu/coca/>) to look up any that are unfamiliar.

 - boutiques
 - trends
 - accessorize
 - variety

Figure 6. Screen shot of sample instructional activities

The **Resources** page contains a compiled bibliography of published academic works on telecollaboration which is likely to be of interest to the audience attracted to this resource. Website guests are invited to contribute to the bibliography by posting references or uploading links to their manuscripts.

Finally, the **Contact** page of the website contains contact information for the PD who will maintain and update this digital humanities resource on telecollaboration in the future.

d. Stage Four: Dissemination to Scholarly Audiences

The PD has led the efforts in disseminating the information about the project, the website to be launched as the digital humanities resource, and the ODH Start-Up Grant opportunity. These high-impact dissemination opportunities include:

- a **colloquium** organized and chaired by Victoria Hasko held at one of the leading conferences in the field of second language research, the annual meeting of American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) that took place in March of 2011 in Chicago, IL. The colloquium entitled *Advances in Telecollaborative Practices for Foreign Language Learning and Teaching: Sharing Experiences, Insights, and Visions for the Future* brought together telecollaboration researchers from around the globe to share their experiences of designing and implementing telecollaborative projects. The PD additionally presented her own paper based on the project at hand and focused on including content acquisition via collaborative projects; the title of the **paper** was *Achieving Linguistic, Cultural, and Discipline-Specific Content Learning Through Telecollaborative Webcasting*.
- a **panel** organized and chaired by Victoria Hasko which was held at one of the leading international conferences in the field of computer-aided language instruction, the annual meeting of the Computer Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO) held in April 2011 in Victoria, B.C. The panel, entitled *Ensuring Successful Implementation of Telecollaboration: Issues of Design, Management, Maintenance, and Evaluation*, featured presentations of

telecollaboration experts from around the globe who shared their “lessons learned” of telecollaborative project design and implementation. The PD delivered her interim version of the NEH “white paper report” at CALICO; the title of her **talk** was *Examining the Dynamics of a Telecollaborative Project Management Lifecycle*.

- a **presentation at an invited panel** by Victoria Hasko at one of the most prominent conventions of Slavic scholars, the annual meeting of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL) in January of 2012 in Seattle, WA. The presentation showcased the web resource materials and explored issues of intercultural and humanities content area knowledge acquisition in the panel entitled *Geographies: Surveying the Virtual Spaces of Language Learning and Discourse*. The title of the PD’s **paper** was *Telecollaborative Webcasting for Increased Content and Linguistic Knowledge*.

Through the colloquium, panel, and paper presentations, the PD was able to disseminate the information about the project and the resource-to-be at highly prominent academic venues which attracted close to a hundred researchers and educators in the field of language education. The impact will increase after the PD submits the work analyzing learner growth and development for publication to scholarly journals.

IV. Lessons Learned

1. The importance of ongoing project management.

One of the most important insights gleaned from implementing the telecollaborative project has to do with a realization of the importance of *project management* during the *life cycle* of a telecollaboration project (Hasko & Hasko, 2011). Here, the term “project management” refers to systematic practices that project managers use for producing specific deliverables, while “project management life cycle” is borrowed from the field of Business Management to refer to an ongoing activity of analyzing and monitoring project dynamics over time which focuses on the process/phases rather than a product. In fact, in the business world, Project Execution is typically identified as Stage 3 and is preceded as such by the two stages of Project Initiation and Planning and followed by Project Closure (Westland, 2007). With telecollaborative projects, finding a willing partner is often viewed as the greatest obstacle. When implementing an educational project, telecollaborating instructors may, therefore, be tempted to finalize the details of the telecollaboration right before or even in the beginning of the academic semester. However, during the pilot stage of the project we realized that telecollaboration activities need to be collaboratively planned, clearly articulated, and explicitly agreed on by both sides. We found that for purposes of project initiation and planning activities, face-to-face meetings during which brainstorming and note-taking take place work best; Skype sessions with video feeds are our second choice of medium.

2. Project initiation and planning work plan.

We found that the following matters are important to discuss at least 3 months (preferably 3-6 months) ahead of time during **Project Initiation** meetings:

- Brainstorming (project goals; tools to use and most advantageous tasks to meet the goals);
- Considering resources (access to internet; software and hardware tools; proficiency of instructors in the use of the tools);
- Signing a partner agreement between universities;
- Mapping out curricular logistics (course within which telecollaborative activities will take place, proficiency level, curriculum integration, percentage of grade, academic consequences of failing telecollaborative assignments);
- Other logistical issues (time differences; time off and holidays; setting up meetings for the instructors to check in and discuss progress, problems, and tune-ups);
- Obtaining IRB approval.

These are sample issues to consider and discuss during the **Planning Stage**:

- Agreement on detailed project goals;
- Detailed curriculum design and task elaboration;
- Development of detailed grading policies and assessment rubrics;

- Syllabi alignment;
- Set telecollaboration syllabus with due dates;
- Contingency plan;
- Risk response plan (i.e., varying levels of enthusiasm, conflicts, misunderstandings);
- Communication plan for instructors;
- IRB approval received.

3. Issues faced during project initiation and planning.

- The U.S. and Russia have very dissimilar **academic calendars**: UGA's Fall semester started mid-August, while OHU's classes did not start until September. Therefore, students at UGA had an introductory class on telecollaboration in the beginning of the semester and had a more relaxed schedule for creating their online profiles and brainstorming about topics for their webcasts than Russian students. UGA students additionally received explicit instruction on the genre of narration and narrative structure (Pavlenko & Hasko, 2008). On the other hand, OHU students' semester did not end until January 2011; therefore, students in Russia had more time for reflection and discussion of the project content after the project closure. The differences in academic schedules had a significant impact on our decision

with regard to the curriculum integration choice of the telecollaborative exchange.

- Several options are conceivable when decisions about how to *integrate telecollaboration into the existing curriculum* are made. Thus, telecollaboration can take place
 - within the framework of a specially developed stand-alone telecollaboration course (e.g., see Belz & Vyatkina, 2008);
 - within the framework of an integrated hybrid course, i.e., telecollaborative activities are systematically worked into the syllabus of a traditional world language course;
 - in the form of extra-curricular activities designed and arranged for by the instructor which students are asked to pursue outside of class but for which they receive academic credit (see Hasko & Colomer, 2011);
 - as non-institutional, leisurely digital engagement students are encouraged to pursue independently to facilitate their learning of language, culture, and content related to their studies.

Naturally, the first option offers maximal opportunities for student engagement and investment while providing ample time in class for joint exploration of the ideas and content generated during the exchange under the guidance and with the input of the instructor. However, given the rigidity of course offerings and

course articulation at the participating institutions, as well as the aforementioned irreconcilable academic calendar differences, we chose to opt for the integrated hybrid course option, which worked well for us.

- Choice of a collaborative activity

Many different activities could be chosen for collaborative projects by those who are interested in using elements of telecollaboration within their courses (see Figure 7, based on Hasko, 2011).

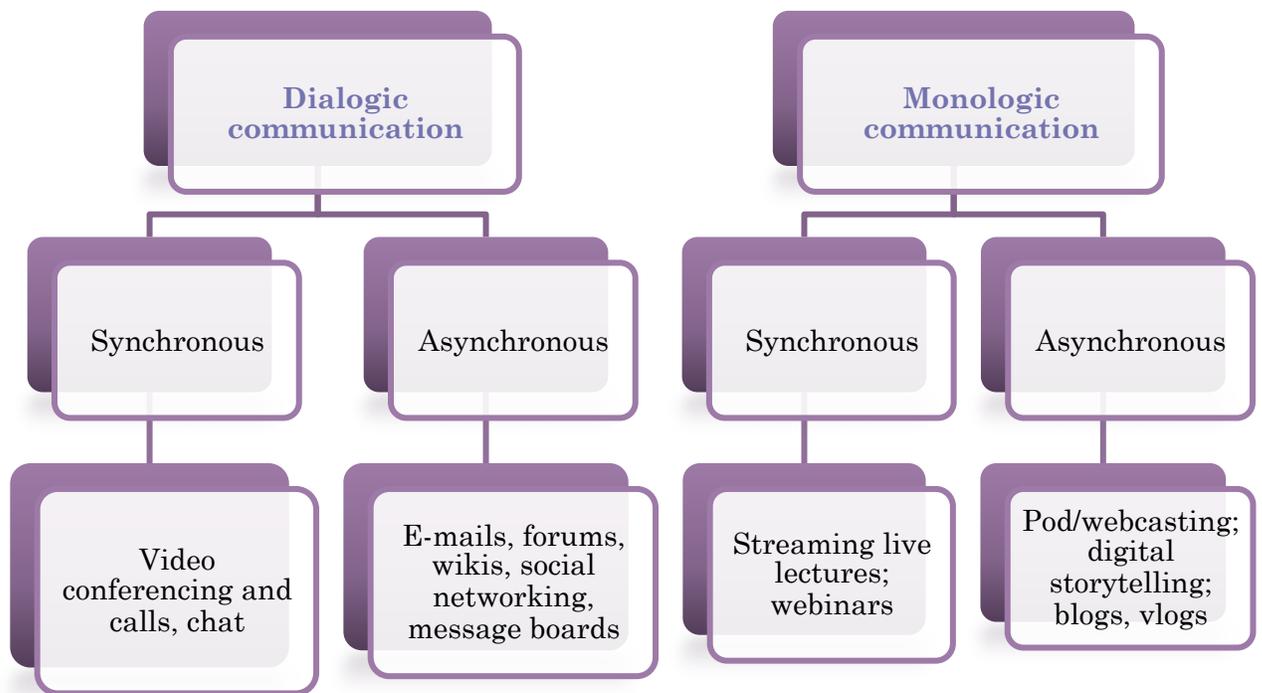


Figure 7. Possible activities for telecollaboration

Why did we choose telecollaborative webcasting alongside social networking as a primary teaching-learning activity for our project? Telecollaborative

webcasting activities create optimal conditions for a focus on extended monologic oral narration, which is an important skill for passing an OPI test, telling a story, sharing a joke, discussing a movie, exchanging personal anecdotes, giving an academic presentation, etc. Narration is an important task of high ecological validity (we engage in it in our daily lives all the time.) Monologic oral narration is typically overlooked in world language classrooms in favor of dialogic communication, but progressing to advanced proficiency levels presents an insurmountable task for language learners if opportunities for discourse-level narration are not presented to them.

According to the National FL Proficiency Guidelines in Speaking (ACTFL 1998), for low intermediate-level learners to advance to higher levels of proficiency and to overcome the “ceiling effect” (Rifkin, 2005) discussed earlier in the proposal, mastery of paragraph-level narration skills is key. Previous studies have been inconclusive in proving that computer-mediated communication improves students’ oral language development and have overwhelmingly analyzed text-based exchanges. In contrast, telecollaborative webcasting necessitates creation and oral delivery of extended narratives in the language of study. Students enrolled in traditional classrooms often report that they never receive an opportunity to produce and present extended narratives to real audiences in their Russian classes and, therefore, they rarely engage in listening comprehension activities or are motivated to work on their narrative proficiency,

fluency of delivery, and comprehensibility with the systematicity that telecollaborative webcasting projects can provide.

Often, communication in world language classrooms is not at all linked to acquisition of academic content knowledge (although content is one of the 5Cs prescribed by ACTFL.) Telecollaborative webcasting is the kind of educational practice that can lead to exploration and acquisition of academic content areas through and via language.

Previous research on computer-mediated language learning has mostly focused on exchanges of personal information and conversational turn-taking, although recent data suggest that such conversational exchanges can be highly formulaic and shallow in content (i.e., they are often comprised of repetitive speech acts that do not carry academic value content-wise, e.g., see Mullen & Shaw, 2008). In contrast, this project was designed to boost language learners' proficiency in Russian and English while cultivating learners' intellectual and cultural enrichment in the humanities content areas. Besides working on the linguistic tasks of producing bilingual webcasts, the design of the project was novel in that it necessitated meaningful engagement with a variety of topics pertaining to various spheres of life and culture in Russian and the U.S., positioning students to relate meaningful content to the overseas peers as ambassadors for their communities' humanitarian riches and cultural values. The focus on academic content led the learners to expand their lexis and

grammar beyond the vocabulary and grammar that a traditional textbook allows for. The telecollaborative component allowed for a “genuine” peer audience with whom participants could share their academic knowledge and interests, as well as compare, explore, and debate viewpoints on various topics in humanities. At the same time, the social networking component provided opportunities for exchanges of personal information and also content-related analyses and intellectual discussions online and in the classroom with their telecollaboration instructors.

Multiple opportunities for self-correction, self-evaluation, and speaking practice go hand-in-hand with such an asynchronous task as telecollaborative webcasting. Commonly-accessible hand-held mini camcorders, as well as such devices as “smart” phones and tablets with built-in cameras, can be used as tools for independent learning as they allow opportunities for students to capture and analyze their own speech. Students can resort to multiple self-correction and re-recording of their speech, if needed, while creating a webcast. And they can do so in a nonthreatening environment, as for some students, synchronous communication via Skype may be more anxiety-inducing. While written computer-mediated communication has indeed been shown to reduce anxiety in world language learners (e.g., see Sullivan, 1996) in comparison to face-to-face real time oral exchanges, webcasting allows for less stressful practice of meaningful oral communication. One of the greatest challenges that world language classrooms face is a shortage of time for speaking activities for

individual students. Research evidence suggests that during a traditional 50-minute lesson, in a world language class of 30 students, the amount of speaking time per student averages out to 30 seconds per student per lesson-or just one hour per student per year (Long & Porter, 1985; see also Dobbs, 1995; Savignon, 2002). Similarly, traditional homework assignments are limited to close-ended, fill-in-the-gaps written exercises that typically do little to promote oral fluency. Designing a curriculum that effectively bolsters communicative competence and increases speaking time for each world language learner presents a significant challenge. Telecollaborative webcasting presents an innovative solution by engaging students in webcast production, which can lead to speaking practice in and out of class. We additionally wanted our project participants to have multiple opportunities to practice their speaking skills while working on a webcasts in their language of study – as many times as they saw fit.

4. Project implementation work plan.

During the **Implementation Stage** of the project, telecollaborating instructors should be prepared to bring students in and work on the following tasks/challenges:

- Providing participating students detailed orientation to the task;
- Informing students about any cultural and institutional differences that might impact their telecollaboration;

- Trying to enthuse students about the project and discussing the benefits of the telecollaboration activities;
- Clearly communicating expectations, grading policies, assessment rubrics;
- Providing continuous facilitation, feedback, and evaluation;
- Offering technological support or arranging for sources of support on campus, if need be;
- Monitoring the success of telecollaboration and facilitating successful collaboration among partners;
- Resolving and mediating conflicts;
- Re-designing and adjusting activities, if the need arises;
- Exploring student-authored content and utilizing teachable moments;
- Maintaining contact and sustaining communication between the instructors.

5. Project implementation issues.

- We found out that differences in the academic culture played a role in the level of anxiety that students seemed to have experienced after learning about the project. Because it is fairly rare in Russia to have a printed syllabus that contains such specifics as assessment rubrics and exact dates for all assignments, Russian students did not express anxiety over the novel activity of telecollaboration. American students, on the other hand, seemed

more apprehensive about the expectations and grading procedures. U.S.-based students seemed to find detailed **assessment rubrics** particularly helpful. Included below is an assessment rubric created to facilitate the creating of a social networking profile by students.

Introductions via YouTube: How your work will be assessed

Write a short, but engaging and informative blurb about yourself in Russian (min 10 sentences; you can supplement this information with some information about yourself in English). Please note that “знакомства” (i.e., introductions via internet) are part of the category “Знакомства, комментарии, обсуждения” which accounts for 20% of your grade.

CATEGORY	3 Points	2 Points	1 Point	0 Points
Non-negotiable	Your profile should contain at least 10 sentences about you in Russian; you can supplement it with information in English			
1. Timeliness Deadline is Sept 17, 11 am	The “bio”, i.e., profile was posted on time	--	--	The bio was posted with a delay ☹
2. Content	The content is engaging and informative	The content is informative but “dry”	The content is presented as a list of facts	--
3. Grammar	The bio in Russian is easy to understand and grammatically accurate	The bio in Russian is easy to understand but has lexical and grammatical errors	Persistent lexical and grammatical errors	--

4. Commentary	Students commented in Russian on bios of other participants (3+ postings)	Students commented in Russian on bios of other participants (2 postings)	Students commented in Russian on bios of other participants (1 posting)	No comments were made ☹
12 points: 100%				

Students were most anxious about creating webcasts, and not only because it is a task of a significant linguistic challenge, but also because they needed guidance in terms of the topic choice and content selection. Included below is a sample assessment rubric created to facilitate the development of webcasts. It goes without saying that instructors showed examples (from YouTube) of what a student authored webcast might look like, discussed expectations in light of the goals of the project, answered all student questions, and made themselves available for any one-on-one consultations during office visits that students needed (only a few students needed one-on-one time). It is important to know that none of the students asked for help with technology (with video recorders or with video editing/sharing).

Creating a webcast: How your work will be assessed

Each student should plan for *approximately* 5 minutes of webcast time in each of the languages. The expectation is that, on average, your individual transcripts per language would add up to about 2pp of double-spaced text, which is a doable task for you to complete twice a semester. Your contributions in English can be shorter time-wise, because your speech rate will naturally be faster. When planning your webcast, you can think of what you

are going to say and practice recording yourself, but do not memorize your notes and do not read your webcasts when you record them.

The aims of the project are not limited to linguistic learning but include facilitating participants' critical thinking and academic development in general. Therefore, assignments will be evaluated based not only on the linguistic form of your webcasts (delivery) but also on their academic content. Therefore, it is expected that you will engage in some research on the topic you are exploring and seek out readings (in Russian and English) from the sources available to you.

CATEGORY	10 Points	8 Points	6 Point	0 Point s
<i>1. Non-negotiable: Time of submission</i>	Your webcast was submitted on time: 10 points			
2. Content	The webcast is engaging, informative, and relates academic content that promotes discipline-specific, university-level learning in the areas of language, culture, and global communities	The content is informative and engaging but the academic content is somewhat lacking in depth	The webcast relates interesting factual information which is lacking in academic depth	

3. Grammar	The Russian text is easy to understand and grammatically accurate	The Russian text is easy to understand but has lexical and grammatical errors	Persistent lexical and grammatical errors that inhibit comprehension	--
4. Pronunciation and fluency	The Russian text is pronounced correctly with fluency and stress that would not inhibit comprehension for a native speaker watching the webcast	The Russian text is understandable and contains some pauses. Mistakes in pronunciation and delays in delivery would not inhibit comprehension for a native speaker accustomed to communicating with second language learners	Persistent pronunciation errors and non-native-like pauses inhibit comprehension	
5.	You actively, extensively, and timely (multiple postings starting on Oct 2) engage in	You engage in discussions of the topics raised in webcasts but your comments are either brief or posted	You post brief comments and/or do not follow up on the responses/questions you receive	

	discussions of the topics raised in the webcasts posted on YouTube (your own and those produced by others)	with a delay		
5 bonus points.	for creativity and humor 😊			
Points.	50 points: 100% 42 points+: 84%+ 34 points+: 66%+			

Figure 8. Webcast Assessment Rubric

Facilitating the flow of virtual discussion and academic commentary based on the webcasts did not always prove easy, as students were often either not sure what to say, asked a ‘yes’ or ‘no’ question which did not lead to productive discussion, or simply posted evaluative comments (“Well-done!”). Therefore, after the pilot project, UGA students were given the following instructions for posting comments:

What makes a good comment?

Listening to the webcasts of the Russian students gives you a chance to improve your listening comprehension skills, as well as to learn new vocabulary and cultural facts. In addition, you have a unique opportunity to ask your overseas partners questions and post your comments based on their wonderfully rich videos. Do not lose out on this unique chance to practice Russian!

Remember that you are required to watch *all* webcasts, comment on *all* of them, and respond to the comments addressed to you (keeping the required 50/50 language balance).

What is a good comment? A good post will lead to cultural/linguistic/academic learning and / or will stimulate further communicative exchanges beyond your own post. So,

- do not just say that you liked the video; point out things that were of particular interest to you and explain why;
- comment on similarities / differences between student life (or whatever the topic is) in Russia and the US;
- ask a question related to the information in the webcast that piqued your interest; it's OK to ask for clarifications!

If you want to post comments on your own webcast, you are welcome to! If you would like me to look at your comments and give you my feedback, please put them together as one document and email them to me.

- We experimented with several [tools for video and audio recording](#), including such mini camcorders as the [Flip Camera](#), [Kodak's Zi8](#), and [Zoom Q3 Video Recorder](#). While students were satisfied with all of the recorders, Zi8 was the only camcorder with mic input, and the capability for using external microphones resulted in higher audio quality of videos shot outside. Another important factor to consider is students' preference for a PC vs Macintosh platform, as the format of the videos created with Flip and Zoom

cameras is compatible with PCs, which files recorded with Zi8s are compatible with Mac computers.

- We also compared several [social networking environments](#). While originally the idea was to utilize *Ning in Education* for social networking and hosting the digital resource with webcasts, *Ning in Education* started charging for their services in 2010. During the piloting stage of the project, we experimented with such social networking environments as Facebook.com and a Russian counterpart, vkontakte.ru. Although both websites allow for the creation of academic groups, we found both of the environments inappropriate for academic use. The Russian site vkontakte.ru did not prove to be a safe environment: one of the student profiles was hacked and inappropriate spam was posted, which led us to shift to Facebook.com during the second half of the project. However, we found that Facebook.com contained too much personal information that students and instructors did not feel comfortable either sharing or being exposed to when telecollaboration participants were joined via “Friend Invites”. During the implementation of the telecollaborative activities in Fall 2010, we used YouTube.com both for sharing and discussing videos for social networking. We had no issues with YouTube and recommend it as our environment of choice for telecollaborative webcasting and associated discussions and commenting.

6. Project closure.

During the **Project Closure** stage, the instructors may want to collect student evaluations and feedback on the project which might inform the design of future telecollaborative initiatives. Reflective discussions about the implementation experiences and honest conversations about the areas of improvement are especially crucial if any future collaborations are being considered. Also, if the telecollaboration activities were conducted with research goals in mind, it is important to backup and share all the data collected during the project, which may involve audio and video recordings of student interactions, student-authored artifacts, survey results, etc. It is important to keep in mind IRB-mandated safety standards for data handling and storage. SurveyMonkey.com is a useful tool which educators may want to use for purposes of collecting student evaluations as well as for collecting external evaluation reports.

V. External Evaluation

Summative external evaluation was conducted by an expert on telecollaboration for purposes of world language education. The evaluator concludes that

[the] project was very successful in reaching all its stated objectives.

Moreover, it has achieved the main goals of the NEH Digital Humanities Start-Up Grants program: it involved aspects of research, education, and access; focused on specific humanities content; and developed new

methods, tools, and technologies that can be used in a wide variety of humanities settings. Therefore, the project's results are definitely worth the NEH program's costs. The project's final product (website) has a long-term potential as both a repository of rich educational resources and a web 2.0 platform for resource and experience sharing for researchers, educators, students, and wider public audiences.

VI. Continuation and Long-Term Impact

As discussed in Section III and summarized in Table 1, the open-access web resource will continue to serve the needs and interests of the global audience interested in issues associated with implementation of telecollaborative projects in world language classrooms as well as of those who would like to utilize the webcasts and associated resources for traditional face-to-face instruction or self-guided learning.

The 2.0 component allows opportunities for material sharing and discussion, which carries the potential for the expansion and improvement of the project by other educators and learners. The website also promises to serve as a useful reference tool and a potential hub for connecting educators interested in finding telecollaboration partners.

The PD has plans to use the website to disseminate the results of a more recent, Fall 2011 pilot teacher education telecollaboration project between UGA and

the Autonomous University of Barcelona in English and Spanish. During this project (which was implemented after the completion of the active collaboration stage with Russia funded by the NEH), K-12 teacher candidates collaborated in a virtual environment to co-author, implement, and discuss culturally authentic materials for K-12 learners of Spanish and English as world languages.

VII. Grant Product

The web resource, www.telecollaboration.info hosts all project materials and serves as the final grant product.

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